

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 10002 191728Z

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SUBJECT: 63RD COUNCIL: MANAGEMENT/STAFF RELATIONS

REF: ROME 9461

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH 63RD COUNCIL CALLED PRINCIPALLY TO DISCUSS FERTILIZERS, MOST CONTENTIOUS AND SENSITIVE ISSUE AGENDA ITEM 7, MANAGEMENT/STAFF RELATIONS. MAIN ISSUE WAS DG REQUEST FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN DG AND STAFF JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE (JAC) SIGNED MAY 31, 1974, WHICH CONCLUDED FAO GENERAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE STRIKE. EXPLOSIVE ELEMENTS INVOLVED WERE: (1) DG THREAT RESIGN AND (2) POSSIBLE NEW STRIKE IF AGREEMENT NOT APPROVED. BOTH DC AND LDC DELS STROVE TO DISCOVER PATH WHICH WOULD AVOID SUCH DISRUPTION WHILE NOT APPEARING TO BE DICTATED TO BY EITHER DG OR STAFF. DELS FAVORED STRICT ADHERENCE TO FINANCE COMMITTEE (FC) DECISIONS, AGREED THAT AGREEMENT DEPARTED FROM THEM IN IMPORTANT RESPECTS BUT, AFTER TWO DAYS' DEBATE, AGREED ACCEPT AGREEMENT AS TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT SUBJECT FC REVIEW AT AUTUMN SESSION AND LESS PROPOSED STAFF RIGHT OF ACCESS TO COUNCIL AND FC. US HARD-LINE POSITION SUPPORTED BY MOST DELS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SEVERITY. BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 ROME 10002 191728Z

COUNCIL'S NEGATIVE RESPONSE MITIGATED IN FINAL ANALYSIS BY DE-

SIRE NOT SHATTER PRESENT DELICATE BALANCE AND BY MAKING ACCEPTANCE TEMPORARY AND PROVISIONAL. END SUMMARY.

1. DELICATE NATURE OF PROBLEM WELL ILLUSTRATED BY LONG PROCEDURAL HAGGLE OVER PERMITTING JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE REP, MISS BENNETT, TO ADDRESS COUNCIL. HER ADDRESS MAINLY OPPOSED BECAUSE WOULD APPEAR PLACE COUNCIL IN NEGOTIATING POSITION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF. COUNCIL FINALLY AGREED THAT THERE WERE SUCH PRECEDENTS IN FAO AND OTHER UN AGENCIES, THAT WOULD DO NO HARM, COULD EASE STAFF SENSE OF ISOLATION AND THAT WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED PART OF DEBATE. MISS BENNETT GAVE DIGNIFIED PRESENTATION EMPHASIZING NOT SALARY LEVELS BUT DISSATISFACTION OF GS STAFF WITH "OUTWORN", "PATERNALISTIC" AND "AUTOCRATIC" FAO PERSONNEL SYSTEM.

2. DG EXPLAINED AGREEMENT AND ACTION TAKEN, DEFENDING "SMALL" DEPARTURES FROM FC DECISIONS, APPEALING TO SHORTNESS OF TIME AND BY INTRODUCING NEW PERSONNEL CHIEF R.H. THOMASSON. HE APPEALED TO COUNCIL TO CONSIDER GRAVITY OF OVERALL SITUATION, AND WIDER CONTEXT OF PROBLEMS AND ISSUES WHICH AFFECTED AND WERE AFFECTED BY LABOR/MANAGEMENT PROBLEM. THOMASSON GAVE DIDACTIC "CLEAN SWEEP", NEW-ORDER PRESENTATION. CLEAR MESSAGE OF ADMINISTRATION WAS THAT FAO HAD TAKEN ON A NEW LOOK AND PERSONNEL WOULD GET MORE AND BETTER ATTENTION HENCEFORWARD.

3. SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE CONCENTRATED ON (A) SYMPATHY WITH STAFF PROBLEM, (B) BELIEF DG HAD EXCEEDED AUTHORITY IN GRANTING TENURE, (C) THAT AGREEMENT TRANSGRESSED FINANCE COMMITTEE DECISIONS, (D) QUESTION OF STAFF RIGHT OF ACCESS TO COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND (E) WHAT SHOULD COUNCIL DO ABOUT IT. SURPRISINGLY LITTLE DISAGREEMENT AMONG MEMBERS ON POINTS (A) THROUGH (D) ALTHOUGH LDC'S TOOK TOUGHEST LINE AGAINST RIGHT OF ACCESS. BIG PROBLEM WAS POINT (E) WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. DISOWNING THE DG REJECTED AS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, ALTHOUGH HE RECEIVED STRONG CRITICISM. TAKING PARTISAN STAND ALSO REJECTED AS DELS AGREED COUNCIL A DECISION-MAKING NOT A NEGOTIATING BODY. FINANCE COMMITTEE WORKED PRAISED AND SUPPORTED BY ALL. MOST DELS FAVORED REFERRING AGREEMENT BACK TO FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW WITHOUT APPROVING DG'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

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PAGE 03 ROME 10002 191728Z

4. IN STATEMENT JULY 18 RESPONDING TO COUNCIL DEBATE, DG APPEALED FOR DEMONSTRATION OF CONFIDENCE, WITHOUT WHICH HE SAID HE COULD NOT FUNCTION. HE APPEALED TO THE COUNCIL TO LET HIM GO AHEAD AND IMPLEMENT AGREEMENT FULLY (LESS COUNCIL ACCESS QUESTION) RATHER THAN REFER MATTER BACK TO FINANCE COMMITTEE, SO THAT HE COULD GET ON WITH REAL AND ENDURING INTERESTS OF FAO, SUCH AS SALELIAN RELIEF, FERTILIZER PLAN AND WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. AFTER LUNCHEON BREAK FOLLOWING DG STATEMENT,

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN CALLED INFORAM LCAUCUS, INCLUDING DG AND HIS DEPUTY, AND KEY DELEGATES (U.S., UK, AUSTRALIA, EGYPT, SIERRA LEONE, PAKISTAN) TO HEAR INFORMAL PROPOSAL OF FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN THAT COUNCIL IMPLEMENT DG SALARY RECOMMENDATION BUT REFER ENTIRE AGREEMENT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE AT ITS REGULAR OCTOBER SESSION. AUSTRALIA, UK, AND U.S. SAID THEY WOULD GO ALONG, PROVIDED COUNCIL ACTION BE REGARDED AS PROVISIONAL PENDING FINANCE COMMITTEE REVIEW BASED ON COUNCIL REPORT AND RECONSIDERATION ENTIRE MATTER AT NEXT COUNCIL SESSION. LDC SPOKESMEN, WHO HAD SEVERELY CRITICIZED STAFF/MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, AGREED TO SUPPORT THIS SOLUTION IN VIEW DG'S APPEAL AND THEIR OVERALL CONFIDENCE IN HIM. DG ACCEPTED SOLUTION, BUT STATED HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN IF COUNCIL DID NOT BACK HIM ON SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS.

5. COUNCIL FINALLY MADE FOLLOWING DECISION RE ITEMS PRESENTED FOR DECISION IN CL63/6, PAGE 4 -

(A) COUNCIL REJECTED POINT 1 RE STAFF ACCESS AS AN AUTOMATIC RIGHT. COUNCIL WOULD, HOWEVER, CONSIDER, IF NECESSARY, ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. POINT WAS THAT DG PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR STAFF MANAGEMENT AND PROBLEMS SHOULD ORDINARILY BE REFERRED TO COUNCIL BY HIM, NOT STAFF.

(B) COUNCIL APPROVED POINTS 2 AND 3 RE NON-APPLICATION COMMISSARY SAVINGS AND 3 PCT WAGE ADJUSTMENT RESPECTIVELY WITH PROVISIO THAT AGREEMENT BE SUBJECT TO FC REVIEW IN FALL AND WITH RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER. THEREFORE, STATUS OF AGREEMENT LIMITED AND STATUS BEYOND NOVEMBER 1974 SUBJECT TO REVIEW.

6. IN MAKING DECISION, COUNCIL TOOK PAINS TO REAFFIRM ITS FULL CONFIDENCE IN DG BUT ALSO THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY OF COUNCIL. IT REMINDED DG THAT COUNCIL CANNOT BE OVERRULED, THAT DG SHOULD NOT DEViate FROM INSTRUCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 ROME 10002 191728Z

AND THAT COUNCIL WILL NOT TOLERATE PRESSURE TACTICS EITHER FROM MANAGEMENT OR STAFF. IN SHORT, COUNCIL'S DECISION NOT TO BE INTERPRETED AS ENDORSEMENT OF A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

7. U.S. STATED POSITION PERSONALLY TO DG (INCLUDING REPORT TO WASHINGTON AND REPLY RE HIS RESIGNATION), TO SPECIAL GENEVA GROUP SESSION AND AT COUNCIL ADDING (A) THAT AGREEMENT NOT AN ASSURED BASIS FRO IMPROVED STAFF/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS AS CLAIMED BY DG; (B) THAT PARTS OF AGREEMENT RELEVANT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE SENT BACK FOR FC REVIEW; (C) THAT STAFF ACCESS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT AND SUBJECT TO SPECIAL APPROVAL; AND (D) THAT PANEL SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED ALSO EMPLOYEE 7 PCT CONTRIBUTION TO PENSION FUND WHICH NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

8. COMMENT: SEVERAL DELEGATES JOINED STAFF AND MANAGEMENT IN VOICING OPINION THAT STRIKE WAS UNNECESSARY AND COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED BY MORE FORESIGHT BY ALL PARTIES. APPEARS TO BE GENERAL FEELING THAT REPETITION OF UNFORTUNATE STRIKE SHOULD, AND CAN, BE AVOIDED IN FUTURE WHILE PRESERVING INTACT INTEGRITY OF FAO SYSTEM AND AUTHORITY OF GOVERNING BODIES. IMPLICATIONS OF FAO'S ACTIONS FOR OTHER UN AGENCIES FREQUENTLY MENTIONED, BUT THOMASSON, IN REPLY, PRESENTED FAIRLY CONVINCING CASE THAT FAO HARDLY THE LEADER AMONG UN AGENCIES IN LIBERALIZING STAFF POLICY. WHILE US STATED HARD-LINE CASE CLEARLY AND IN GREATER DETAIL THAN OTHER DELS, US NOT ISOLATED AND RECEIVED VOCAL SUPPORT OTHER DELS. BELIEVE THAT FINAL OUTCOME THIS SENSITIVE AND POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE ISSUE OF BENEFIT TO BOTH MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATION, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW FORTHCOMING SERIES OF MAJOR POLICY MEETINGS. VOLPE

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